



## First Steps

**Start slow and on a small-scale and build your program as relationships and local capacity develop.**

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- Feature one local food item at one school and /or meal.
- Use the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) as a way to start offering local produce. The FFVP allows you to pay higher amounts per serving for produce, and provides the flexibility of buying a snack portion rather than integrating produce into a reimbursable meal. (1)
- Evaluate menus for current foods that can be purchased locally.
- Get students involved and introduce new produce via taste tastings. (2)

### Conduct a self-assessment

Complete a self-assessment to find out your kitchen, cafeteria, staffing, storage, and procurement readiness for farm to school. Use [this guide](#) to help you with long term planning and determine what short term action you should take. (2)

### Build a team

It is important to involve everyone who ideally should be part of the farm to school program implementation, such as the child nutrition director, school board representatives, school administrators, students, parents, and local food producers and distributors. (2)

- Be creative and inclusive when forming your team. Having a diverse team will help you develop an exciting and achievable farm to school vision and plan.
- Review the Farm to school Implementation and Promotion section of the USDA Farm to School Team [2010 Summary Report](#) for a list of key stakeholders identified during the 2010 Farm to School site visits.

- Review the [Promoting Farm to School Activities](#) webpage, which provides ideas for engaging school district personnel and connecting with the community.

### **Establish a vision and plan**

Use [this guide](#) to start the planning process for your program.

### **Contact local producers**

Once you have a team and a plan in place, you are ready to contact local producers! (2)

- Participate in grower-buyer meetings
- Visit farmers markets
- Contact your county extension agent or state farm to school contact
- Attend local, regional, or national meetings related to farm to school
- Look for ideas on our list of Links.

### **References**

1. USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/ffvp/> for more information.
2. USDA Food and Nutrition Service, USDA Agricultural marketing Service. USDA Farm to School Team 2010 Summary Report (2011). Accessed at: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2010\\_summary-report.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2010_summary-report.pdf)